

CHRIS CAWLEY: I'm Chris Cawley. I'm also here from the little mountain town of Alta today like my colleague a couple speakers ago. I'm not an elected official but I am someone who has chosen to live in a community that subsists on natural resources. Alta is best known for our synonymous local ski area which attracts a half million people to its slopes every year from around the world. Less well known is that Alta is home to an incredibly rich community of committed families who devoted our lives to our unique town and who rely on the Wasatch mountain snowpack for our livelihood and lifestyle. Like so many communities across the American west Alta is feeling the effects of climate change. Our winters are becoming unpredictable and our annual snow totals are declining as summers get longer, harder, and dryer. We've been spared the vast horrific wildfires that have stricken urban and rural areas throughout the West in recent years. But when thick brown smoke from a thousand miles away obscures our summer horizon for weeks on end as immense swaths of bark beetle infestation creep further up the canyons, it's likely a matter of time before our luck runs out in this regard, and make no mistake Alta's economy will be crushed in a matter of hours by catastrophic fire. And Alta without reliable snow will become coincident with the state of Utah without our industry's provision of tax revenue and international appeal, and with the Wasatch Front metro area projected to double in population by 2050, without its source of drinking water which emanates from nearby mountain snowpack. Coal extracted from federal land is contributing to climate change and communities large and small will continue to bear the financial burden of impacts to our natural and economic resources for generations. It's time for the Department of Interior to account for these social environmental costs. Communities like ours need help adapting to the changing climate. We need help planning more resilient economies. We need help investing in disaster resistant infrastructure. We need help envisioning a future with different challenges than we have today for it seems entirely certain that we will all have to make some very hard choices about how we sustain ourselves in the future. This is not a radical statement. It's a recommendation for due diligence, fairness, and common sense. I urge the federal government to consider the burden that carbon emissions related to its coal resources are placing on communities like all of ours in its reevaluation of the Federal Coal Program. It's time we all receive a fair return on this public resource. Thank you.